



Charlotte Mason's House of Education,
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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affect can be genuine only in so far as it rests on a patriotic *national* feeling. If we do not love those of our own household the less we talk about loving Humanity with a big *h* the better. It is in respecting ourselves that we respect others. The youth of the country, then, must grow up in a knowledge of their own national record of arts and arms just as they must grow up in and through their own tongue and their own literature; and this they *must* do, if they are intelligently and sympathetically to comprehend the life of other nations, past or contemporary. Education fails to attain its moral and civic ends if it does not connect a boy with his own national antecedents and all that has made him and the present possible, and it equally fails to attain the ends of culture in its larger sense.

But while this is our first aim, we must never lose sight of our supreme purpose—the enriching of the humanity of the pupil with a view to an ethical result in him as a member of the human race.

(To be continued.)

NATUREFORM SHOES.

BY MRS. SCOTT.

I SUPPOSE we have all admired a baby's foot. It is a perfect form of beauty until we spoil the natural formation with a shoe: then, alas! the foot becomes rather an unsightly member in most people, who console themselves by wearing pretty shoes instead of having beautiful feet.

If you compare the foot of a child of twelve years old with a baby's you will notice a very distinct difference of form: the tiny foot has a gentle curve inward from the heel to the great toe, and the *toes* not the "ball" of the foot is the widest part. In the older child's foot the curve is in exactly the reverse position, and the toes are squeezed up, and leaning over to each other, the widest part of the foot being across by the big toe joint, which is probably by this time enlarged, and forming a prominence upon the curve. What has been done to cause this? You have put the child's feet into shoes made in the shape of a foot belonging to an animal of no known species; his feet have had to grow to fit the shoes, instead of the shoes being made for the feet. You will see what I mean if you compare the little naked foot of a child of a year old with the ordinary shoe you buy for him, particularly if you turn the shoe up and study the sole. Now it is quite possible to get Natureform shoes, or shoes made the natural shape of the foot, from Holden's, in Regent Street, or their agents in any town, and I do not think that any parent who did so would care to go back to the old-fashioned shoe. To begin with, the child walks so much better, and enjoys walking. He walks with the beautiful easy carriage which is his by nature, and runs lifting his feet up freely and gracefully. He stands firmly forward on his feet, not back on his heels, and he does not get flat-footed, because he uses his toes in walking, and does not lift his foot up and down like a hammer.

It seems to me a most ridiculous thing that all these years we have been wearing shoes quite different from the shape of our feet because everybody else does. I must confess that

I did not urge my big boy to wear Nature-forms when I first got them for the children, for he had always worn what I called "sensible" boots, and I thought my new fad might made him feel shy at school: but he very soon asked for a pair, and refused to wear anything else, for "they are so good for 'footer.'"

The straight shoe does not answer the purpose, because the natural foot is not straight but gently curved inward, and what is wanted is perfect freedom for the big toe joint. By compressing the toes into the ordinary shoe you force the joint of the big toe outward, much enlarging that part of the foot which ought to be narrower than the toes, and often causing a good deal of pain and inflammation in the joint. We all know the misery of taking a long walk in a shoe which is uncomfortable, and even what we consider a comfortable shoe for ordinary wear we are often thankful to change after a long walk. I have taken walks of ten or twelve miles often in Natureforms, and never feel as if I needed to change them when I come in, or felt the least discomfort. I can truly say I have enjoyed every *step* of the way. And the same with the children. My little girl of ten years old walked the other day with us about six miles in under two hours over heather and grass, and was not a bit tired afterwards.

So few people seem to care about walking nowadays, or to be good walkers. It is rare too, to see a person who has a graceful carriage, and very few grown-up people can *run*. I attribute this to the malformation of our feet, but it seems a thousand pities to let the children follow in our footsteps. No exercise is more natural or healthy than walking if it does not produce over-fatigue, but of course if we are using our muscles all wrong, we tire and injure other parts of our body besides the foot, and walking does us harm. So closely does one part of the body act on the whole. How soldiers manage on long marches I do not know, but I believe it is true they suffer very often from footsore, and tender feet.

It seems to me that one of the first duties with children is to consider thoughtfully their different bodily requirements and set yourself to procure the thing that appears to you the most suitable and comfortable for them in the way of clothing; the most digestible and nourishing food; the most

sanitary and cleanly surroundings, with an environment as beautiful and cheerful as you can make it. This means constant common sense, and attention to small details, as well as being always on the look-out for any little improvement we can notice, or any good we can gain from others.

I think until a child is a year old, it is much better to let it wear nothing on its feet, unless it has very cold feet, when I would let it wear woollen baby's boots, for cold feet are often a source of trouble to a child; but in the summer and in the house, a child so much enjoys the freedom of going barefoot, and it learns to walk so much more easily and well without shoes at all; but when winter comes, and of course when the child is out in the town, or anywhere but where there is no danger of broken glass or nails, &c., to tread on, shoes become a necessity, and then is the time to get the proper shaped shoe for the child's foot. And not only the shoe but the stocking must be considered, for if you get the Natureform shoe and put it over a stocking which compresses the toes, you of course lose all the good of the shoe. They are best with a division for each toe like a glove, so that none of the toes can be packed too tightly together, but they are quite good with only one division for the big toe, or simply woven in one in the Natureform shape, as Jaeger stockings are. By the way, it always surprises me that Jaeger *stockings* and *socks* should be Natureform and their shoes ordinary shoemaker's soles. All the good of the shape of their stockings is of course lost. I have begun my children from one year old with Natureform shoes and socks with one toe division, and never find that they cause the least discomfort. They have worn them for some years now, and the feet of the older children are just as perfectly formed as the baby's. Of course with grown-up people, the difficulty is that the foot has become malformed, and is not at all like the shape of a Natureform shoe. It is necessary for most people to wear them with a small division between the big toe and the other toes, which is fixed into the shoe, and obliges the big toe to return to its natural position. It is quite worth the trouble and uncomfortableness at first attendant on wearing this, if you only persevere in wearing it until your feet are right again. The great additional pleasure in walking and good to one's general health amply repay the inconvenience.

Now I get to the main difficulty which I have kept to the last. "But the shoes are so *ugly*!" most women say to me. They look *different*—they mean from what they have been accustomed to see;—therefore they are hideous. You do not call the feet of a Greek statue hideous and there are paintings of ladies with Natureform feet which do not appear to you to be ugly. I tell you what is ugly, only it's covered up: and that is a foot with corns and bunions on it, chilblains or ingrowing toenails, or hammer toes. I shudder to think what some pretty shoes would reveal if they were taken off. We should not be so much in love with Cinderella then! I think it ugly, too, to see a woman walk all wrong from the hips and stand all on one side when she is still, or back on her heels instead of on the ball of the foot, and I want my girls to grow into graceful women who can run and dance and skate beautifully, so that it may be a pleasure to see them take active exercise, and not an ungraceful exhibition such as one does occasionally see with the modern maiden.

SCIENCE AND RELIGION.

PART III.

BY MRS. DOWSON, L.R.C.P. & S., I.

THE British Association has held its annual meeting since the second of these papers was printed, and the President of the Mathematical and Physical Section has delivered an address bearing closely on the subject we have in hand. The position he takes up with regard to the proper work of physical science and its attitude towards great problems has many points of interest for us. He speaks plainly of its work as descriptive and not explanatory, except as a clear description of appearances can explain. He holds that physical science never touches the questions of causation and of meaning. "A broken law," he says, "is merely a false description"; and "we can at least assert that meaning will only have true content when it is concerned with purpose and will. On the purely physical or descriptive view, the idea of cause is quite out of place. . . . It would be a very real gain, a great assistance to clear thinking, if we could entirely abolish the word 'cause' in physical description: cease to say 'why' things happen unless we wish to signify an antecedent purpose, and be content to own that our laws are but expressions of 'how' they occur." He says also that "we *think of* a constitution of matter which shall enable us to explain all the various changes in terms of visible motions and accelerations" and "*imagine* a mechanical constitution of the universe"; not because we have discovered the universe to be itself mechanical, but because our sense of sight is the sense which makes *mental pictures* most definite. This opinion tells in favour of our contention that men of science who read the construction of their descriptive apparatus into the constitution of the universe are overstepping the boundaries imposed upon science by the limitations and the character of its method and scope.

We cannot, however, ignore the fact that there are other scientific men of eminence who hope to find, or even believe